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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the criteria for admission to teacher education at 50 National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) accredited undergraduate universities. These universities varied in geographical location, public and private affiliation, and size of student enrollment. The study analyzed and evaluated admission criteria in light of recent educational reforms that call for higher standards and more qualified candidates in order to ascertain whether the universities had actually implemented more demanding performance based on criteria for teacher candidate selection. Based on the findings, the study identified the absence of standardized admission criteria and consistent policies of ongoing assessment. It proposed a balanced integration of both performance based admission criteria as well as continual evaluation of program goals in the admission and education of preservice teachers. (Contains 32 references.) (Author)

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Bottom Half of the Pool:
Who is Admitted to Teacher Education?

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Abstract

This study investigated the criteria for admission to teacher education at 50 NCATE accredited undergraduate universities. These universities varied in geographical location, public and private affiliation and size of student enrollment. The study analyzed and evaluated admission criteria in light of recent educational reforms that call for higher standards and more qualified candidates in order to ascertain whether the universities had actually implemented more demanding performance based criteria for teacher candidate selection. Based on the findings, the study identified the absence of standardized admission criteria and consistent policies of ongoing assessment. It proposed a balanced integration of both performance based admission criteria as well as continual evaluation of program goals in the admission and education of preservice teachers.

Bottom Half of the Pool: Who is Admitted to Teacher Education ?

Introduction

The beginning of the Twentieth Century saw massive changes taking place in American society. The United States had entered an era of transition from an agricultural based society to one of industrialization. During this period, a combination of factors which included the use of intelligence tests, the arrival of immigrants from Europe, and the rise in technologies and theories of psychology focused attention on the importance of education (Kliebard, 1987). More schools, diversified curriculum programs of study, and better prepared teachers were needed if the United States was to achieve global power. Having recognized the growing need for a variety of educational programs, states began to pass legislation that permitted local school districts to provide for improved programs of study (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1978). These measures also increased the demand for teachers in all areas and levels of study and mandated that they should be well prepared to teach. In response to the demand for better prepared teachers, many universities began to expand their already existing programs of teacher education by adding new courses. These early programs in teacher education not only required the liberal arts component, but eventually added a component of professional studies. For example, the professional studies component for general education teachers included methodology courses in planning, teaching strategies, and discipline (Kauffman, 1981).

Efforts to improve the preparation of teachers was not limited to the first part of the Twentieth Century. Hobb (1975) noted that efforts to improve teacher education were consistent throughout the entire Twentieth Century and were dependent upon relevant developments which linked the American society with the rest of the world. Prominent events which played a major role in the development of teacher education included: Sputnik, the ensuing American involvement in space and the Civil Rights Movement. The move toward human rights for all meant that everyone, regardless of race and/or handicapping conditions had an equal right to education and a productive

life. The science and technology that resulted from the new space programs influenced the curriculum of American classrooms. Future teachers were expected to take more courses in math and science in their programs of preparation and they were expected to integrate technological advances.

This combination of new opportunities created by scientific technology and the quest for equal rights for all began to adversely affect the pool of exceptional candidates applying to professional education programs. New opportunities for students to seek lucrative careers in medicine, law and industrial leadership began to deplete the pool of talented individuals seeking to enter the teaching profession (Darling-Hammond, 1984.) The initial push toward improvements in teacher education were not sustained. As a result, the educational reform movements of the past twenty years have focused not only on improving the performance of students at American schools, but also on improving the performance of their teachers. Federal commission reports of the 1980's (A Nation at Risk, 1983, Action for Excellence, 1983; Academic Preparation for College, 1983), as well as national reform reports (The Holmes Group, 1986; The National Network for Educational Renewal, 1990, concluded that the current preparation of American's teachers is inadequate and falls short of America's future educational needs. Of major significance is the ongoing challenge concerning the selection and retention of highly qualified candidates for teacher education programs. Feiman-Numser (1990) states that "The primary goal is to prepare teachers who can carry out the task of teaching with proficiency. Learning to teach involves the acquisition and practices derived from the scientific study of teaching. Competence is defined in terms of performance" (p. 223). In 1987, accreditation standards were revised by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) in order to make those standards for teacher education more demanding and rigorous. The intent of the revision was to develop the same sort of quality assurance procedures which were already in place in other professions (i.e. law and medicine). Three areas which were addressed by NCATE in this 1987 revision included: professional

accreditation of the colleges which train teachers, more stringent state licensing procedures to insure that teachers have an appropriate knowledge base and a call for greater recognition/reward of experienced teachers. Although there has been some effort over the past few years to implement these procedures and adhere to stricter guidelines in teacher preparation programs, the results have been disappointing. Of the 1,279 schools of education in our country, only about 500 have met national accreditation standards (Wise, 1995). In addition to the lack of adherence to the national standards, there has been even less attention directed toward assessing the caliber of the student entering a professional program of teacher education. Although voice has been given to performance based review of teacher candidates, the content of the revisions has been focused primarily on program assessment and review. In reality, most of the indicators to NCATE's Standard 1.D. are being used as post program quantitative evaluators if they are being employed at all (Wise, 1995). There is a need for qualitative evaluation of individual teacher candidates before admittance to a school of education and a consistent, ongoing assessment of an individual's continued progress in the program. The calls for reform in the procedures for quality assurance in the teaching profession should extend to the admission policies for teacher education candidates if an impact is to be made on the level of expertise of the graduating, licensed, prospective teacher.

A major problem faced in the implementation of rigorous standards is that admission policies to schools of teacher education vary significantly from one institution to another. Most institutions base admission decisions on a combination of the student's previous academic record and their test scores (Haney, 1990). These criteria of acceptance emphasize past achievements and quantitative information, in spite of the fact that research shows that these are ineffective predictors of future teaching success, (Shechtman & Godfried, 1993). Quantitative measures are failing to provide the type of teacher candidates identified as essential in recent educational reforms, (i.e., Teachers for the 21st Century (1990), Goodlad's Center for Educational Renewal and Teacher Education in a Democracy (1991). Standardized paper and pencil tests do not assess a

candidate's ability to establish and maintain rapport with students, or help motivate and facilitate communication (Hilliard, 1986). They also do not assess the moral or ethical qualities of the candidate (Jacobowitz, 1994). Current research cites that most teacher education candidates come from the bottom of the academic pool (Andrew, 1986).

A knowledge base is essential to quality teaching and should be measured as one of the criteria of teaching performance. It is equally as important however, that the qualitative issues which have been identified by recent research as more effective indicators of teacher candidate success and future teaching success not be ignored (Shechtman & Godfried ,1993). These qualitative measures address the hidden agenda of teacher education and the numerous variables which impact a candidate's success or failure. Although more difficult to assess, these qualitative measures yield potential information which is crucial to the selection and preparation of future teachers as well as the development of standards for admission to teacher education. While most selection committee members involved in admission to teacher education decisions would agree that qualitative measures are better indicators of overall success, quantitative measures are employed more frequently because they are less likely to be challenged, they are inexpensive and time efficient (Hilliard, 1986) and because they allow a screening of large pools of candidates (Haberman, 1974).

The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards has developed standards and assessments which base licensing on performance-oriented criteria. Arthur Wise (1995), President of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, states that prospective teachers should demonstrate competence, needed knowledge, and acceptable proficiency. The new 1994 revision of NCATE standards also emphasizes prospective teacher performance. NCATE standards now require schools of education to monitor and evaluate teacher candidates throughout the program of study and to use performance assessments as part of their evaluations (Wise, 1995). NCATE's Standard II.D., *Ensuring the Competence of Candidates*, also states that the school of education is

expected to assess a candidate's competence before the completion of the program. These standards, while more rigorous in theory, do not fully answer the question of how to consistently and effectively screen candidates before they enter schools of education and then evaluate them both qualitatively and quantitatively at regular intervals. In addition, although the standards have been recently put into place, data from this study and a previous pilot study (Speaker & Petersen, 1995) indicate that many schools have yet to implement them.

Given this context, research has clearly demonstrated there is a dilemma in the actual implementation of specific criteria to assess the qualifications of teacher candidates who desire admission into schools of education. Although policies have begun to be implemented to assess the teacher candidate's professional ability at the conclusion of the teacher education program, consistent entrance standards for acceptance into teacher education programs are practically nonexistent. It was the purpose of this study to conduct an examination of recent university policies for admission to teacher education. This study analyzed and evaluated admission criteria in light of recent educational reforms that call for higher standards and more qualified candidates in order to ascertain whether programs had indeed implemented more demanding performance based criteria for teacher candidate selection. Based on the findings, the study identified the absence of standardized admission criteria and consistent policies of ongoing assessment and proposed a balanced integration of both performance based admission criteria as well as continuous evaluation of program goals in the admission and education of pre service teachers.

METHODOLOGY

In order to assess the present policies used in determining student admission to teacher education programs, this study employed the qualitative and quantitative analysis of data drawn from university published materials, telephone inquiries, teacher-education and public school teacher interviews and surveys of the Dean, Chair or Director at 50 NCATE accredited universities/colleges having Schools of Teacher

Education. Specifically, the study was interested in examining teacher education programs and in particular their admission, evaluation and retention policies. Colleges and universities selected to participate in this study were chosen to reflect diversity in school size, geographical location and both public and private orientation.

Data Collection

Data for this study was collected in two phases. Phase one consisted of the selection of 50 NCATE approved undergraduate teacher education programs. University programs were selected based on their representation of all geographic regions in the United States, private or public orientation, and variation in size. Each institution was contacted by letter requesting published materials on their education programs as well as specific information on the criteria employed in the admission process to the teacher education program. Upon reception of these materials, phone calls were made to make additional queries concerning the school's process for selection, retention and evaluation of teacher education candidates. The second phase of data collection consisted of administering questionnaires to the Dean, Chair or Director of each Teacher Education program in order to receive specific information on the admission and evaluation criteria and procedures at each institution.

Instrumentation

The survey was developed utilizing ethnographic interviews with public school teachers and university faculty involved in the education of pre-service teachers. The interviews were tape recorded and verbatim transcripts were made. This data, in conjunction with the published information received from each school and a review of current teacher education reform literature formed the basis for the construction of survey domains and questions to be used in this study. The first draft of the survey had 52 binary choice items with some open-ended questions. This version was field tested with teacher-education faculty who had experience in the recruitment, selection and education of pre-service teachers. These field tests resulted in revisions of survey length, question placement and directions for completion. The final survey was three pages in

length and number of items was reduced to 44. The questionnaire focused on the following areas: (1.) Specific admission criteria, (2) On-going evaluation procedures and (3) Demographics of each school's program. The time it took participants to complete the survey ranged between 7 and 12 minutes.

Procedures

A review of the literature on teacher education reform which included a search of ERIC was undertaken. In addition to the current literature, national educational reform recommendations were also examined. These studies and reports were chosen for two reasons: they reflect general themes for improving teacher education and their date of publication would have permitted implementation of the recommendations. The Federal commission reports of the 1980's A Nation at Risk, 1983, Action for Excellence, 1983, were examined as well as national reform movements The Holmes Group, (1987); The National Network for Educational Renewal, (1990).

Based on the findings in the literature, general, open-ended questions regarding the selection, retention, education and evaluation of pre-service teachers were developed. Appointments were then made with teacher-education faculty and public school teachers to conduct ethnographic interviews. Interviews ranged between 30 and 45 minutes in length. All interviews were tape recorded and verbatim transcripts were made. Systematic examination of each interview was conducted using a two-part domain analysis (Spradley, 1979). Survey questions were constructed through the integration of domains and concepts generated from interview responses as well as information previously obtained from a review of the literature.

A map of the United States was divided into the following geographic regions: Northwest, West, Midwest, South, Southeast, and Northeast. Within each geographic region a pool of undergraduate schools of education were selected based on size and public and or private orientation. Each institution was assigned a number and table of random numbers was employed to select schools in each region.

Cover letters explaining the nature of the study along with a copy of the survey were mailed to either the Dean, Chair and or Director of each university's teacher education program. Survey participants were assigned a number for confidentiality and tracking purposes. Approximately 18% of the sample responded to the first mailing. After two weeks a second mailing was sent to each participant who had not returned the survey materials. Two weeks later a third mailing was conducted. The procedural follow-up mailings eventually resulted in a final return of 33 surveys of which 32 were useable for analysis. This resulted in a total sample size of 32 or a 64% return rate.

RESULTS

Specific admission criteria

Examination of the institutions used in the study revealed general consistencies in many of the criteria employed in the admission of students to Teacher Education programs. However, while most institutions used similar criteria, data collected from this study revealed some discrepancies.

Insert Table 1 about here

Grade Point Average (GPA): While 31 (96.8 %) of the participating institutions positively responded that a minimum grade point average was required for admission to the teacher education program, grade point averages did vary significantly. Five (15.6%) of the institutions required a minimum GPA of 2.75 or higher for admission. Twenty two institutions (68.7%) required a minimum GPA of 2.50 for program admission while, 2 schools (6.2 %) required a GPA of 2.25 and 2 other institutions (6.2%) required a GPA of 2.0. One school (3.1%) indicated that a minimum GPA was not a criteria for admission to their teacher education program.

NTE or PRAXIS I/PPST Exam: Participants were queried whether they require candidates to take (but not pass) the NTE or PRAXIS I/PPST for admission to their program. Of the schools that responded to this question, 14 (43.7%) indicated that they

required candidates to take one of these tests prior to admission. Of the schools that required students to take these exams all of them required satisfactory performance on the General Knowledge and Communication Skills sections for admission into their program.

Standardized Instrument for Admission: Participants were asked aside from standardized exams like the NTE and/or PRAXIS I/PPST, or in conjunction with them, did they employ other standardized exams or instruments like the Basic Skills Test, SRI Perceiver or some other test in their admission of teacher candidates. Only 7 (21.8%) of the schools in this study indicated that they used these types of tests in their admission procedures while 23 (71.8%) indicated that they did not use any standardized instrument or test and 2 (6.2%) failing to answer the question. Of the schools that employed these tests, 3 (15.6%) of the schools used scores from the Basic Skills Test, 1 (3.1%) used scores from the SRI Perceiver, 2 (6.2%) used SAT/ACT scores and 1 (3.1%) used a regional exam in their admission of teacher candidates.

Letters of Recommendation: Respondents were asked whether they required letters of recommendation in behalf of candidates applying for admission. Fourteen (43.7%) of the schools in this study indicated that letters of recommendation were required, while 18 (56.2 %) did not require them. Three schools (9.3%) indicated that letters of recommendation were required, but only in the case of a student appealing their denial of admission to the program. Schools that required letters were then queried about the number of letters required and who was asked to write them. Five (15.6%) of the schools required three letters, 8 (25 %) required two letters and 1 (3.1%) required only one letter. Ten (31.2%) of the schools indicated that letters of recommendation came from education faculty, 9 (28.1%) indicated that letters from other university faculty were required, 4 (12.5%) of the schools sought letters of recommendation from current practitioners and 4 (12.5%) required letters from faculty in the student's major or minor or from other outside personal references.

Interviews: Participants were queried about their program's use of interviews as an admission procedure. They were also asked about whether or not interviews were conducted individually or in small groups, who was involved with the interviews of potential candidates and what types of questions were asked in the interview sessions.

Twenty (62.5%) of the respondents indicated that interviews were not required while 11 (34.3%) did require them and 1 (3.1%) failed to respond to the question. Of the programs that did use interviews, individual interviews were used in all the programs 11 (100%.) Respondents were ask to indicate who was involved in the interview process. All of the institutions that employed interviews reported that education faculty acted as interviewers. Two (6.2%) respondents also indicated that other university faculty were involved and 2 (6.2%) schools also made use of current teaching practitioners as interviewers. Four (12.5%) survey participants indicated that students completing the program acted as interviewers and 1 (3.1%) respondent indicated that retired (emeritus) faculty were also involved in the interview process.

Aside from conducting interviews, this study was interested in obtaining information on the topics of questions asked in the interview process. Participants were asked to indicated whether questions covering particular topics were asked in the interview session. The list of topics included: Actual teaching experiences, classroom management strategies, instructional strategies, professional knowledge, subject content, current issues in education and an other category. Nine (28.1%) of the respondents indicated that questions addressing the issue actual teaching practices were asked in their interviews. Three (9.3%) of participants indicated that questions on classroom management were queried, 3 (9.3%) asked questions about instructional strategies, 5 (15.6%) asked questions dealing with professional knowledge and subject content respectively. Seven (21.8%) of the respondents indicated that questions addressing current issues in education were asked of potential candidates. Seven (21.8%) survey participants completed to the "other" category in this section of the survey. Of these 1 (3.1%) respondent indicated that interviewers asked candidates why they wanted to

teach, 2 (6.2%) asked interviewees about their actual experiences with children, 1 (3.1%) asked candidates about their previous employment, 2 (6.2%) asked students about their personal history and background and 1 (3.1%) respondent did not indicate the subject or types of questions posed to interviewees.

Demonstration of Instructional Ability: Survey participants were queried about their programs' requirement to have candidates demonstrate some form of instructional ability, in this case a mini-lesson and/or presentation. Only 3 (9.3%) of the respondents positively indicated that their school had such a requirement while 28 (87.5%) of the respondents indicated that they did not require students to conduct mini-lessons or presentation and 1 (3.1%) failed to respond.

Additional Course Requirements: Participants were asked if additional course requirements were a prerequisite for admission. Thirty one (96.8%) of the participants indicated that their institutions required the completion of specified college course work before a student could be apply for admission to their teacher education program. These requirements ranged from the completion of 55 to 60 semester hours while maintaining a 2.0 to 2.5 GPA before application, to the passage of a select number of undergraduate educational courses. Three (9.3%) schools required the successful completion of a Freshman English and Speech course, the completion of three professional education courses and the satisfactory completion of appropriate clinical and field experiences with a GPA of 2.5 or higher.

Observation and on-going evaluation procedures of student teachers

Aside from admission criteria employed by teacher education programs, this study was interested in seeking information about the types of on-going evaluation procedures these programs employed after a student had been admitted to the program. Survey respondents were queried about who was involved in the observation of student teachers in their field placements, whether their institution had other forms of on-going evaluation and the type(s) of ongoing evaluations employed.

Field Placement Observation: Thirty one (96.8%) of the respondents indicated that education faculty were the primary observers and evaluators of student teachers in field placements. Fifteen (46.8%) participants indicated that other university faculty were also involved in field observation and evaluation, 26 (81.2%) indicated that current practitioners were used and 9 (28.1%) had graduate students conduct student teacher observations and evaluations.

On–going Evaluation: Twenty seven (84.3%) of the respondents indicated that aside from the traditional classroom observation, their program employed some other form of periodic evaluation of student-teachers. Of the participants who responded, 1 (3.1%) indicated that the NTE (Professional Knowledge Battery) was used as means of on-going evaluation, 12 (37.5%) respondents indicated that they used the traditional academic standards of a student's GPA or projects like student portfolios, 5 (15.6%) indicated that conferences with cooperating teachers and university supervisors as well as student's self-evaluations were used as periodic evaluation criteria and 9 (28.1%) of participants indicated that they used a combination of GPA, student teacher portfolios and conferences with cooperating teachers and university supervisors in their on-going assessment.

Special Recruitment Policy:

In a 1984 report on the supply and demand of teachers, Darling-Hammond indicated that because of a lack of financial rewards, opportunities for advancement and administrative support caused academically talented women and minorities, who were once restricted to teaching to choose other more lucrative professions. Calls for schools of education to recruit and retain individuals from ethnically diverse backgrounds in teaching continues to be documented (Jordon-Irvine, 1992). This study was interested in obtaining information on whether or not institutions had a special recruitment emphasis or policy to encourage women and underrepresented populations into their teaching programs. Fourteen (43.7%) of survey participants positively responded to this question, while 17 (53.1%) indicated that their institution did not

have such a recruitment emphasis and 1 (3.1%) respondent failed to answer the question.

Demographics of each school's program

Administrators (Dean, Chair and/or Director) for these programs were asked about the number of full–time education faculty as well as the total number of students enrolled in their education program.

Insert Table 2 about here

Faculty: Three (9.6%) of the schools had a full-time faculty staff that ranged between 100 to 150, 6 (19.3%) schools had staffs ranging between 50 and 99, 6 (19.3%) had staffs ranging between 20 and 49, 8 (25.8%) had staffs ranging between 19 and 10, and 8 (25.8%) had staffs ranging between 9 and 1. One (3.1%) respondent failed to answer the question.

Insert Table 3 about here

Students: Like the number of full-time faculty in these programs, the number of students in the these schools of education varied. Two(6.9%) of the participants indicated that the number of students in their education program ranged between 2,500 and 4,500, 6 (20.6%) indicated that the number of students ranged between 900 and 2,499, 4 (13.7%) indicated that their program had between 400 and 899 students, 11 (37.9%) indicated that their enrollment was between 100 and 399 students, and the range of students for 6 (20.6%) schools was between 10 and 99 students. Two (6.2%) respondents failed to answer this question.

Comparison of Reform Criteria and Admission Requirements

All of the teacher education programs examined in this study were NCATE approved. Of the 32 programs examined, all had certification programs in elementary,

secondary and special education. The quantitative measures in use by the institutions surveyed indicate some compliance with educational reforms also cited in this study. However, there doesn't seem to be any general trend evident in requirements for admission to programs or in course work, field placements or ongoing evaluations of work undertaken by the prospective teacher. It would appear that minimal standards are being utilized by the various schools of teacher education that participated in this survey: For example, 75% of the teacher education program required a grade point average ranging from 2.0 and 2.5 (on a 4.0 scale) which is the equivalent of a "C" average. Less than half of the programs required students to take any form of standardized test demonstrating professional knowledge, or did they require letters of recommendation. Only 34% of the schools required student interviews and far less 9.3% asked students to demonstrate some form of instructional delivery.

National reports and the reforms that resulted from them A Nation at Risk, (1983) Action for Excellence(1983), The Holmes Group, (1987), and The National Network for Educational Renewal, (1990) offered only mere suggestions as to how to improve the current state of mediocrity found among teacher education candidates. Since the actual strategies and means for carrying out these recommendations are left to each individual institution of higher education, many gray areas still exist. The 32 institutions examined here, like numerous others across America, have made attempts to raise the standards and quality of those admitted into teacher education, but the admission criteria are not rigorous enough to guarantee the quality of the teacher education candidate. The actual success of these attempts cannot be measured in graduation rates of teacher education programs alone. Success must be measured by follow-up studies of the graduates in actual classroom settings.

DISCUSSION

While each of these schools has received national accreditation, the discrepancy in admission criteria is startling. Minimum grade point averages range from none to 3.0, while the average is around 2.5. Use of standardized testing and letters of

recommendation were employed at less than half of the institutions examined. Interviews of prospective teacher candidates were used at only 34.8% of the schools, in just a few of these schools did the types of questions posed to candidates inquire about actual teaching experience, classroom management, instructional strategies, professional knowledge, subject content or current issues in education. Demonstration of instructional delivery was only used at 3 (9.3%) schools. Requirement of additional course work was fairly consistent among the requirements cited at these institutions. While these criteria are adequate for screening out obviously unqualified candidates, they do not predict the quality or potential success of teacher candidates.

The focal point of the recent educational reforms revolves around questions concerning the ability, commitment and quality of our nation's teachers and the programs which prepare them. The data presented in this paper represents an attempt to examine the impact of such reform rhetoric and the resulting changes made in teacher education programs. This study had several limitations.

First, due to the nature of this study only a limited number of institutions were examined. Although all geographic sections of the United States were targeted and the focus placed on NCATE accredited institutions, there are numerous institutions which prepare teachers that are not NCATE accredited.

A second limitation involves the interpretation of reform suggestions. Since the institutions studied vary significantly in size and resources, not all implemented reform suggestions in the same manner. For example, four year colleges do not have the resources to expand their teacher preparation programs to five years and may not have the pool of applicants larger institutions have from which to choose.

Study limitations also include the abbreviated descriptions of teacher education programs found in the individual institutional catalogs, telephone interviews and the actual survey instrument. While descriptions implied higher standards for teacher education candidates, little evidence could be gleaned as to instructional strategies and

content of each course as well as the depth and breadth of each institution's overall admission process.

Fourth, while specifics were noted in terms of GPA, course requirements and other requirements to be met before gaining entrance into teacher education programs, few, if any exceptions were noted. (i.e. opportunities to raise the GPA, petitions to drop course work not applicable to the education major, and backdoor policies).

Finally, any additional criteria such as actual interview questions, faculty generated competency requirements and similar materials that would set standards for acceptance into a teacher education program were not available.

The general lack of consistency in terms of requirements for admission to Teacher Candidate programs at the University level poses a problem in identifying and recruiting outstanding students for teacher education programs. Present requirements appear to establish minimal guidelines and allow very little scrutiny of abilities which would be predictors of potential success in classroom situations.

Quantitative methods of evaluation for admission to teacher education are not identifying or screening for the most qualified students. We must consider qualitative measures in addition to the quantitative methods which we have been relying upon, to begin to select candidates of a higher caliber than have been admitted to teacher education programs in recent history.

The screening that must be established for admission to teacher education programs should be much more rigorous than it is at present. We allow too many students who meet the minimal quantitative measures (i.e. GPA) to gain admission to education training programs when the very essentials for success in the field (i.e. actual teaching expertise, psychological profiles, input from site practitioners) are seldom used as a criteria for review. There are a number of suggestions which would enhance the process and combine quantitative and qualitative measures in the evaluation of teacher candidates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study have indicated that initial screening and ongoing evaluation of teacher candidates needs to be modified to more clearly reflect the mission of teacher education programs and the most recent NCATE standards: to develop competent, skilled and qualified future educators. These goals should be performance based and require the teacher candidate to demonstrate a level of mastery in both content knowledge and teaching ability.

We recommend that a variety of different criteria be used to evaluate the candidate. A higher GPA than is presently used at a majority of schools reviewed here (2.5) should be established. Although, GPA alone is not a predictor of teaching success, it does reflect competency in content and professional knowledge. The screening process should also incorporate some method of psychological testing, (i.e., Sixteen Personality Questionnaire or the CPI, California Psychological Inventory) which would help to determine a candidate's attitude toward authority, their concept of self, their emotional stability, and flexibility. We also recommend that the initial evaluation include a method of speech screening which would enable the interviewing panel to see the candidate in an active instructional role and allow them to evaluate how well the individual candidate is able to articulate and convey ideas, concepts and instruction. While the requirement for letters of recommendation was fairly common, this study proposes that students receive at least one recommendation from an active practitioner with whom the student has worked. The letter should attest to the candidate's ability to work with students as well as colleagues, their professionalism and their attitude toward numerous teaching responsibilities. Finally, we recommend a panel interview to be conducted by participants who are not exclusively university faculty. This panel should include administrators, teachers and possibly active student-teachers who would join university faculty to participate in the interview process. The insights and expectations of professionals in the field will greatly enhance the ability of the university to choose candidates who will meet all or most of those professional criteria.

It is essential that the evaluation of teacher candidates be an ongoing process. To achieve that end, candidates should submit a portfolio and a video tape of actual teaching for blind review by a committee made up of teachers, principals, university faculty and parents at periodic intervals. This committee would screen each teacher candidate at regular intervals to insure that the quality of the candidate's work continues to meet the established goals of the teacher education program.

Suggestions for Further Research

In accordance with the cited limitations of this study, we recommend the following areas for in depth study: First, a longitudinal study should be undertaken to examine the results of the initiation of more rigorous admission criteria. Second, a follow up study should be designed to examine the impact of these more rigorous admission criteria and their ability to predict future classroom teaching success. Also, a study should be designed to focus on criteria, format and type of questions to be used in the evaluation of potential teacher candidates.

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Table 1

Admission Requirements to Teacher Education Programs [a]

Admission Criteria	Description	N	Percentage
Grade Point Average:	Minimum GPA requirement for admission.	31	96.8%
NTE/PRAXIS II:	National Standardized Exams for Teacher Education.	14	43.7%
Standardized Exam:	Other standardized exams or instruments like the Basic Skills Test or SRI Perceiver etc.	7	21.8%
Letters:	Letters of Recommendation for admission.	14	43.7%
Interviews:	Individual or Group Interviews required for admission.	11	34.3%
Instructional Ability:	Require candidates to conduct mini-lesson or presentation prior to admission.	3	9.3%
Additional Courses:	Additional course work prior to application for admission	31	96.8%
On-going Evaluation:	Some form of post-admission evaluation of student teachers.	27	84.3%
Special Recruitment:	Recruitment policy of female and minority student teachers.	14	43.7%

Note. Frequencies and percentages reflect positive responses to survey questions.

[a] n = 32 teacher education programs represented.

Table 2

Number of Full–Time Education Faculty

Number of Full–Time Faculty	N	Percentage
100 to 150 Education Faculty	3	9.6%
50 to 99 Education Faculty	6	19.3%
20 to 49 Education Faculty	6	19.3%
10 to 19 Education Faculty	8	25.8%
1 to 9 Education Faculty	8	25.8%

Note. Frequencies and percentages reflect numbers of university faculty at the various colleges and universities participating in this study.

* n = 31 teacher education programs represented.

Table 3

Number of Students in School Education Programs

Number of Students	N	Percentage
2,500 – 4,500	2	6.9%
900 – 2,499	6	20.6%
400 – 899	4	13.7%
100 – 399	11	37.9%
10 – 99	6	20.6%

Note. Frequencies and percentages reflect numbers of education students at the various colleges and universities participating in this study.

[a] n = 29 teacher education programs represented.

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